

Health Policy

NEWSLETTER

The Impact of Education on Health Care Quality

The 18th Annual Dr. Raymond C. Grandon Lecture

Thomas J. Nasca, MD, MACP

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To kick off his keynote presentation at the 18th Annual Dr. Raymond C. Grandon Lecture, Thomas J. Nasca, MD, MACP, the former Dean of Jefferson Medical College, had an important reminder for the physicians in the audience: the work they do produces a social good. That social good, Dr. Nasca continued, is the equitable distribution of the “good” of health care and the restoration of health – wherever possible to members of society.

Dr. Nasca’s lecture, “The Impact of Education on Healthcare Quality,” touched on the challenges facing medical education in the United States and the importance of understanding the fundamental roots of the medical profession.

Dr. Nasca is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), a private, non-profit council that evaluates and accredits medical residency programs throughout the United States. A board-certified internist and nephrologist, Dr. Nasca received his undergraduate degree from

the University of Notre Dame in 1971, and his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in 1975. In 1992, he joined Jefferson Medical College and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital as Vice Chairman of the Department of Medicine, where he directed the undergraduate and graduate medical education programs of the department.

Having established that healthcare is one of the goods of society, Dr. Nasca posited that social justice is what compels physicians to administer its distribution. Taking it one step further, Dr. Nasca cited the Hippocratic Oath. “It comes down to nine words,” Dr. Nasca said, “*these things I do solemnly swear, upon my honor* – the last nine words of the Hippocratic Oath compels us to do this.”

In order to improve quality and safety outcomes, Dr. Nasca suggested physicians look to Tiger Woods as a role model. Woods, the number one golfer in the world, is known for grueling practice sessions where he’ll hit the same difficult shot – a

buried lie behind a tree, for example – 100 times before moving on to another, which he will also hit 100 times. Physicians, Dr. Nasca said, don’t practice challenging situations intentionally; they practice circumstantially. Medical students are encouraged to study, Dr. Nasca noted, but there is more to medicine than knowledge.

While healthcare professionals must always strive for improvement, Dr. Nasca concluded, it is important to remember that the quality of healthcare provided in academic medical centers is “statistically, significantly better in every metanalysis” than what is provided in non-teaching hospitals. “We should be proud of what we do because we do it well,” Dr. Nasca said. “That’s what we’re committed to. We’re committed to continuing excellence.” ■

To listen to an audio recording of this lecture visit: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/hplectures/6/>.